



**DECISION MEMO**  
**Rosedale Septic Phase II and Fuels Reduction**  
**at Rosedale Administrative Site**

**2021**

**USDA FOREST SERVICE - Deschutes National Forest**  
**Crescent Ranger District**  
**Klamath County, Oregon**

The Crescent Ranger District is working with Midstate Electric Cooperative and the Crescent Sanitary District as upgrades to the the Forest Service septic system and associated Midstate electric lines are needed at the Rosedale Administrative site. In addition, fuels reduction is necessary. The 119-acre Rosedale Administration site contains the Forest Service employee housing and fire workstation, bunk houses, and cook house. Fuels treatments would include (thinning six inches DBH and under, mowing and/or mastication, piling and burning). Thinning would be to 100-222 trees per acre.

The reduction of hazardous fuels and ladder fuels will create an area where wildland fire fighters can more effectively fight future wildfires and will reduce the potential ecological impacts from intense wildfire. This unit also borders state-managed lands to the south and private lands to the west, north, and east. Hazardous fuels reduction will reduce the risk of wildfires to those non-Federally managed adjacent lands.

Rosedale is located within the Crescent Ranger District, Deschutes National Forest, Klamath County Oregon. The legal description of this project is T25S, R8E; Section 1; Willamette Meridian.

**Purpose and Need**

*There is a need to upgrade the septic facilities and connect with Crescent Sanitary District to complete the septic upgrades on the bunkhouses, fire compound and to bring the Rosedale Administration site in compliance with federal, state and county regulations.*

*There is a need for fuels reduction work including thinning, mowing and/or mastication at the Rosedale Administration site to create a strategic fuel break. This would help to protect the Administrative site as well as neighboring State and private lands from a large wildfire.*

**Proposed Action**

I am approving the following actions to meet the Purpose and Need.

**Project 1: Phase II Septic**

- Lift Station # 2 will be installed. Hole would be approximately 6' W x 15' L x 20' Deep.
- Electrical panel adjacent to lift station on two 4 x4 posts buried approximately two feet deep.
- Approximately 2,505 feet of 6-inch SDR 35 gravity sewer line would be trenched and installed between bunkhouses, fire compound and Lonely Doe Campground.
- Approximately 500 feet of 2-inch SDR 40 pressure sewer line between Lift Station #1 (near house 1051) and Lift Station #2 would be trenched and installed.
- Ten cleanout stations installed.

- Four manholes installed (concrete manhole measure 65 inches wide by 67 inches high, thus actual hole would be larger).
- Existing septic tanks will be pumped, filled with sand and abandoned in place.
- Trenching for lines would be 24 inches wide but depth would vary as needed to achieve a 1-2% down slope (5% is maximum allowable for gravity feed system) back to Lift Station #2. A mini excavator would be used to dig trenches for Project 1.

### **Project 2: Fuels Reduction**

Fuels reduction activities would include:

- Thinning: Trees, and Shrubs
  - Thinning would occur in conifers six inches DBH and under.
  - No trees greater than six inches will be cut except for hazard trees.
  - Brush within the project area < 3 inches DBH may be cut, mowed or masticated to further promote fuels reductions.
  - Remaining stumps will be flush cut to preserve visual quality heights will be cut as low to the ground as possible.
  - All snags within the project area will be left to promote wildlife habitat unless they pose a safety concern to operations.
  - Thinned material may be available for personal or commercial fuel wood.
- Prune
  - Increase the canopy base height to 5 feet, allowing for multiple and varying canopy base heights to preserve scenic character for Highway 97 corridor.
- Hand Pile/ Grapple Pile
  - Piling by hand or mechanized equipment.
  - Piling of down and dead material to reduce existing fuel loading.
  - Down and dead material  $\geq$  8 inches DBH will be left to promote wildlife habitat.
- Pile Burn
  - Piles are burned during the wet season to reduce damage to residual trees and to confine fire to the pile's footprint.
  - Approximately one pile per acre will be left for wildlife habitat.
  - Pile burning treatments should be implemented within one year of cutting treatment to be most efficient for burning.
- Mowing / Mastication
  - Brush within the project area < 3 inches DBH may be cut, mowed or masticated.

Work may include use of heavy equipment such as an excavator, front end loader, dump trucks, tractor with mowing head, and/or masticator. Based on topography trenching may be deeper in certain locations.

### **Reason for Categorical Exclusion and Findings**

Decisions may be categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment when they are within one of the categories listed in 36 CFR 220.6(e), and there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the decision that may result in a significant individual or cumulative effect on the quality of the human environment.

### ***Category of Exclusion***

There are two appropriate categories of exclusion. Both are found in the Forest Service National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations. For the septic at 36 CFR 220.6(e) (2). This category is appropriate because the project involves: "*Additional construction or reconstruction of existing phone or utility lines in a designated corridor.*" For the Fuels reductions its 36 CFR 220.6(e) (6) *Thinning or brush control to improve growth or to reduce fire hazard....*"

### ***Relationship to Extraordinary Circumstances***

In determining the appropriateness of using the categorical exclusion, a determination of the potential impact to the resource conditions identified in FSH 1909.15 Section 30.3(2) must be made. The following is the list of the potential effects to the resource conditions from the project activities.

#### ***1. Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species.***

- **Wildlife:** This project would have “**No Effect**” to the northern spotted owl and designated critical habitat and would not contribute to a negative trend in viability on the Deschutes National Forest. This project would have “**No Effect**” to the Oregon spotted frog or its Critical Habitat.
  - This project would have “**No Impact**” to Northern bald eagle, gray wolf or fisher.
  - Implementation of Phase II septic and fuels reductions projects “**May impact individuals or habitat but will not likely contribute to a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability to the population or species**” for the western bumble bee, Morrisoni bumble bee and Suckley cuckoo bumble bee.
- **Plants:** This project would have “**No Effect**” to any threatened, endangered, and “**No Impact**” to R6 Sensitive plant species.
- **Fisheries:** This project would have “**No Effect**” to any threatened, endangered, and “**No Impact**” to R6 Sensitive fish species as there is no water in the project area.

#### ***2. Flood plains, Wetlands, or Municipal Watersheds Flood plains***

Executive Order 11988 provides direction to avoid adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of flood plains. Flood plains are defined by this order as, “... the lowland and relatively flat areas adjoining inland and coastal waters, including flood prone areas of offshore islands, including at a minimum, that area subject to a one percent [100-year recurrence] or greater chance of flooding in any one year.”

**Wetlands:** Executive Order 11990 is to avoid adverse impacts associated with destruction or modification of wetlands. Wetlands are defined by this order as, “... areas inundated by surface or ground water with a frequency sufficient to support and under normal circumstances does or would support a prevalence of vegetative or aquatic life that requires saturated or seasonally saturated soil conditions for growth and reproduction. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas such as sloughs, potholes, wet meadows, river overflows, mud flats, and natural ponds.”

There are no municipal watersheds, floodplains, or wetlands within the project area.

#### ***3. Congressionally Designated Areas Such as Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and National Recreation Areas***

There are no Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas, or National Recreation Areas within or adjacent to the project. The nearest Wilderness is Diamond Peak Wilderness located approximately fourteen miles to the northwest of the project area. There are no Wild and Scenic River corridors in the project area. The closest is the Crescent Creek Wild and Scenic River corridor, which is approximately seven miles to the northwest. The Oregon Cascades National Recreation Area is eleven miles to the west of the project area.

#### ***4. Inventoried Roadless Areas or Potential Wilderness Areas***

There are no inventoried roadless areas in or near the project area. The nearest Inventoried Roadless Area is the Maiden Peak IRA, which is 14 miles to the northwest.



There are no Potential Wilderness Areas that meet the criteria of Forest Service Handbook 1909.12 Chapter 70 (71.1) within the project area.

#### **5. Research Natural Areas**

There are no Research Natural Areas within or adjacent to the project area. The Cannon Well Natural Area is approximately eleven miles to the southwest of the project on the Fremont-Winema National Forest.

#### **6. American Indian and Alaska Native religious or Cultural Sites, Archaeological Sites, or Historic Properties of Areas**

This project meets the criteria under the 2004 Programmatic Agreement among the USFS Region 6, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the Oregon State Historic Preservation Officer for a determination of “*No Historic Properties Affected.*” This project has been determined to be compliant with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Based on the conclusions regarding the effects to the resources and conditions listed above, I have determined the project will have no extraordinary circumstances that may result in a significant direct, indirect, or cumulative effect on the quality of the human environment.

#### **Public Involvement**

Public scoping and Tribal consultation were conducted in conjunction with the release of the preliminary Decision Memo. Comments were accepted from March 30, 2021 through April 29, 2021. The Klamath Tribes responded with Interest in the project. One local landowner who is adjacent to National Forest lands was concerned it would look like a clear cut plus wind throw would affect trees on his property and skid trails would allow for unauthorized activities. His concerns were addressed in an email back to him and a project design feature created to retain some brush and strategically placed logs/debris to reduce motorized access.

#### **Consistency with Deschutes Land and Resource Management Plan**

I have reviewed the *Deschutes National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision 1990* (Forest Plan), as amended by the *Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* (Northwest Forest Plan, 1994) and the *Pacific Northwest Region Invasive Plant Program 2005*, and have determined that the project is consistent with the amended Forest Plan goals, objectives, and standards and guidelines. Biological Evaluations were prepared for Sensitive, Threatened, and Endangered animal, and plant species and are located in the project file at the Crescent Ranger District. Also, the project meets all of the applicable Project Design Criteria from the 2014 Programmatic Biological Assessment for central Oregon.

This project is outside the boundaries of the Northwest Forest Plan, thus Survey and Manage requirements do not apply.

#### **Scenic Views**

This project activity goals are consistent with maintaining the naturalness of the area, provide scenic diversity, maintain the health of the vegetation, and reduce risk of fire. There are approximately 65 acres of Scenic Views- Foreground along Highway 97 and specifically, this project would be consistent with Management Area M9-55 “*Trees maybe removed from lodgepole pine foregrounds where necessary to: perpetuate the desired visual condition.*” In addition, M9-58 applies where “*slash from a thinning or tree removal activity, or other visible results of management activities (except prescribed fire) will not be*

*obvious to the casual forest visitor within three years after work has been completed."* (LRMP 4-128 as amended by Scenic Views FPA July 2019).

#### **Additional National, State, and Local Laws and Direction**

This project includes pile burning. These actions would cause more than incidental dust. There would be short-term impacts to communities and residences downwind and adjacent to areas where pile burning would occur. This project would be consistent with the Clean Air Act, of 1963 as amended. The amount and direction of emissions from pile burning would be controlled to meet air quality standards and guidance provided by the Oregon Smoke Management Plan and all other applicable federal, state, and local air quality regulations.

This project is consistent with the *Clean Water Act of 1972*. There are no 303(d) listed streams or waterbodies in the project area.

This project will not disproportionately affect any social groups or civil rights. The U.S. Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination in its employment practices based on race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital and family status. This project will not have any disparate effects on any consumers, minority groups, women, civil rights, or social/ethnic groups. This project will be compliance with Executive Order 12898, Environmental Justice.

This project is consistent with the *Endangered Species Act of 1973*. This project is compliant with Executive Order 13186, Conservation of Migratory Birds related to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of 1918, as amended.

#### **Implementation**

When the Decision Memo is signed, project implementation can begin once final approval is received from the Crescent District Facilities Manager. The following project design features will be included to meet project objectives and/or to reduce or minimize unwanted effects:

##### *Cultural*

- For any ground disturbance work- if imported fill is utilized it must be from a culturally sterile source (meaning there is no possible contamination from fill originating from another buried archaeological site).
- If, prior to, or during construction work, items of archeological or historical value are reported or discovered, or an unknown deposit of such items is disturbed, the contractor would immediately cease activities in the area affected. The District Archaeologist would be notified, and ground disturbing activity would not resume until written authorization is provided.
- Should human remains be encountered, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), 25 U.S.C. 3001 et seq. [Nov. 16, 1990] and its regulations (43 CFR §10) would apply.

##### *Silviculture*

- The Silviculturalist will work with Fuels staff to ensure that LRMP standards for the Scenic Views management area are met.

##### *Wildlife*

- The Wildlife Biologist will work with Silviculturalist and Fuels staff on any additional wildlife leave areas not defined in DM, if needed.
- To retain functionality of leave areas no project activities can occur within them.



- The existing leave area provides the largest contiguous block of big game hiding cover, all the red-tailed hawk nesting habitat, and nest, foraging, and hiding cover for other wildlife species within the project area (Figure 2).
- If any of the species listed in Table 1 is discovered during implementation the appropriate restriction would apply. To mitigate disturbance to the goshawk, Cooper's hawk, sharp-shinned hawk, and gray wolf seasonal restrictions will apply: No disturbing activities will be conducted during periods of seasonal restriction. Refer to Table 1 for the restriction period. Nest Sites: for goshawk (LRMP WL-12) and red-tailed hawks, eagles and ospreys (LRMP WL-5) the date is May 15<sup>th</sup>. For Cooper's hawk (LRMP WL-20) and sharp-shinned hawk (LRMP WL-20) nest site will be considered inactive if not occupied by June 15<sup>th</sup>. (USDA 1990).

**Table 1. Wildlife Mitigations Seasonal Restrictions**

Species*	Seasonal Restriction
Bald eagle	January 1-August 31
Goshawk	March 1-August 31
Red-tailed hawk	March 1-August 31
Gray wolf	April 1- July 15
Osprey	April 1 – August 31
Cooper's hawk	April 1-August 31
Sharp-shinned hawk	April 15- August 31
<i>*Species listed due to habitat proximity to project area (MIS Figure 1).</i>	

- All felled trees will be left on site as close to the felled location as possible and left as whole as possible.
  - Associated felled limbs that are  $\geq 8$  inches diameter at the small end, will be left on site and as whole as possible.
- All snags within the project area will be left to promote wildlife habitat unless they pose a safety concern to operations. If deemed to be felled, the felled snag would be left on site intact as possible.
  - If possible, safely cut the hazard tree high enough to mitigate hazard, leaving a taller snag for wildlife.
- Snags  $\geq 20$  inches dbh and down wood  $\geq 16$  inches diameter at the large end that are in an advanced stage of decay or that have ants present would be protected, e.g. protected from burning, as forage for marten and woodpecker species.
  - Dead material over  $\geq 9$  inches diameter at the small end ( $\geq 8$  inches diameter for lodgepole pine) will be left in place. Down wood may be moved out of the way for utility upgrades and/or to breakup the continuity of fuels but must remain on site and whole.
- In order to meet dead wood needs in treatment units the following standards in Table 2 need to be maintained.

**Table 2. Dead Wood Standards**

Species	Tons per Acre	Diameter Small End*	Approximate Whole Tree Equivalent	Percent Cover
Lodgepole Pine	7-42	8 inches	25-150 whole trees 10 inches in diameter or 17-100 whole trees 12 inches diameter or an equivalent in larger or mixed diameters. If no trees of nine inches dbh are present, leave 45 whole trees per acre of the largest available.	2.6-15.9
Stands Dominated by Ponderosa	12-20	9 inches	50-100 whole trees 10 inches in diameter or 16-27 whole trees 16 inches diameter or equivalent in larger or mixed diameters.	2.8-5.2

Species	Tons per Acre	Diameter Small End*	Approximate Whole Tree Equivalent	Percent Cover
Pine				
Ponderosa Pine Stands Where Lodgepole Pine Comprises Most Down Wood	Not specified in this plant association	9 inches	8-10 whole trees of the largest LP on site plus retain all other species.	0.1-0.3 in lodgepole
Mixed Conifer	11-42	9 inches	50-200 whole trees 10 inches in diameter or 16-60 whole trees per acre 16 inches diameter or equivalent in larger or mixed diameters.	2.6-10
Below is from Appendix B Revised Interim (Direction Eastside Screens), 1995 (pg10)				
Vegetative Series	Down Wood Pieces per Acres (Diameter Small End)*		Piece Length and Total Lineal length	
Ponderosa Pine (PP)	15 to 20 (12 inches)		> 6 ft. 100-140 ft.	
Mixed Conifer (MC)	15 to 20 (12 inches)		> 8 ft. 120- 180 ft.	
Lodgepole Pine (LP)	3 to 6 (8 inches)		> 6 ft. 20-40 ft.	
*Where minimum diameters cannot be met, the largest available would be left.				

#### Fire/Fuels

- To deter unauthorized use, retain shrubs and strategically place slash and logs where skid trails from other lands intersect National Forest System lands.

#### Botany

- Equipment Cleaning - Actions conducted or authorized by written permit (contracts) require cleaning of all heavy equipment (i.e., bulldozers, skidders, and other construction equipment) prior to entering Forest Service lands. Equipment will be inspected on-site by the Forest Service project manager or the District botanist prior to start of work.
- If rock material is used for project: All gravel, fill, sand stockpiles, quarry sites and borrow materials used for this project will be inspected for invasive plants before such material is transported and used within Forest Service lands. Any infested sources must be treated before use of pit material. Only gravel, fill, sand, and rock that are judged to be weed-free by District or Forest weed specialists will be used for this project
- If mulch material is used for project: Only weed-free straw and mulch will be used for projects conducted or authorized by the Forest Service on National Forest System Lands.
- All workers need to inspect, remove, and properly dispose of dirt, mud, weed seed and plant parts found on their clothing and equipment before entering the project area.

#### Transportation

- Equipment operators/operations will have a spill kit on site on site of sufficient size to clean up and prevent further contamination.
- Forest Service will be informed of any observed petroleum spills.
- For any forest system road related activities please contact the Crescent Ranger District's Road Manager/Transportation Planner at (541) 433-3254 at least 10 working days prior to the proposed activities. Issuance of a road use permit may be required.
- If any unauthorized roads or trails are identified during implementation or as new routes are created or identified, these routes may be decommissioned after District Specialist review.

#### Soils

For fuels reduction work:

- Machine piling treatments to reduce fuel loadings shall be implemented to minimize soil disturbance as follows:
- Restrict grapple piling machinery to designated routes or previously disturbed surfaces where fuel loads are moderate or low. Where fuel loads are high, limit off-trail machine travel to no more than two passes on any piece of ground.
- Where feasible, turns and pivots should be constrained to existing disturbances to limit soil displacement.
- Operators shall plan travel paths to make full use of the machine's capability (e.g., using full boom reach of machine) to limit ground disturbance and minimize number of off-trail passes needed to achieve treatment objectives.
- Where feasible, pile fuels (both hand and machine piles) on existing disturbances to minimize additional detrimental soil impacts from burning.

Mastication or other mechanized understory treatments to reduce brush and fuel loadings shall be implemented to minimize soil disturbance as follows:

- When using a boom-mounted implement, operator shall plan off-trail travel paths to make full use of the machine's capability (e.g., using the full boom reach of the machine) to limit ground disturbance and minimize the number of off-trail passes needed to achieve treatment objectives.
- When using a machine with a front-mounted fixed masticating head, work in long, linear swaths to the extent practicable to avoid unnecessary pivoting and turning, which results in soil displacement damage.
- Operator should not allow masticating heads or other implements to contact the soil surface, which can result in detrimental churning and mixing of the soil.
- Machines shall make no more than two passes over any piece of ground (when not on existing disturbances).
- Detrimental soil impacts resulting from understory treatments shall be isolated and infrequent (less than 5% of the area). Detrimental impacts include total removal of surface organics and topsoil, churning/mixing of topsoil with subsoil, rutting greater than six inches deep, and heavy compaction.

For septic work:

- Establish and enforce staging, disturbance, and stockpile limits to the minimum necessary to safely and efficiently operate machinery required to accomplish trenching and line installation work. Use previously-disturbed surfaces wherever possible.
- In the event that excavated soil is not immediately replaced or removed (or any time a major precipitation event is forecast), site-appropriate erosion control measures must be in place to prevent erosion/transport of excavated material and offsite impacts.
- Previously undisturbed or lightly-disturbed areas that are trafficked by more than two passes of heavy machinery should be scarified/roughened (e.g., with excavator bucket teeth) to encourage infiltration and reestablishment of native vegetation.
- Any excess excavated material that will not be used for backfill must be transported to an FS-approved disposal site, or evenly distributed over previously-disturbed areas that have been loosened or scarified (do not spread over existing vegetation; do not spread over heavily compacted areas where limited infiltration will result in surface erosion).





## **Best Available Science and Conclusion**

My conclusion includes a review of the record of relevant scientific information, a consideration of responsible opposing views, and the acknowledgment of incomplete or unavailable information, scientific uncertainty, and risk.

## **Administrative and Appeal Rights**

The final decision is not subject to appeal or objection. On January 17, 2014, the President signed into law the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014 (Pub. L. No. 113-76). Section 431 of that Act directs that the 1992 and 2012 legislation establishing the 36 CFR 215 (post-decisional appeals) and 36 CFR 218 (pre-decisional objections) processes "shall not apply to any project or activity implementing a land and resource management plan ... that is categorically excluded ....under the National Environmental Policy Act [NEPA]." As a result, the Forest Service no longer offers notice, comment, and appeal opportunities pursuant to 36 CFR 215 for categorically excluded projects such as the one covered under this Decision Memo.

## **Contact Information**

For additional information concerning this project, contact Darrell Meadows, Facilities Manager, or Wendy Detwiler, Fuels Technician, at Crescent Ranger District, 136471 Hwy 97 N/ P.O. Box 208, Crescent OR 97733, or by phone at (541) 433-3200.

**RYAN SULLIVAN**  
**Acting District Ranger**  
**Crescent Ranger District**

**DATE**



**Figure 1. Rosedale Septic Phase II and Fuels Reduction Map**



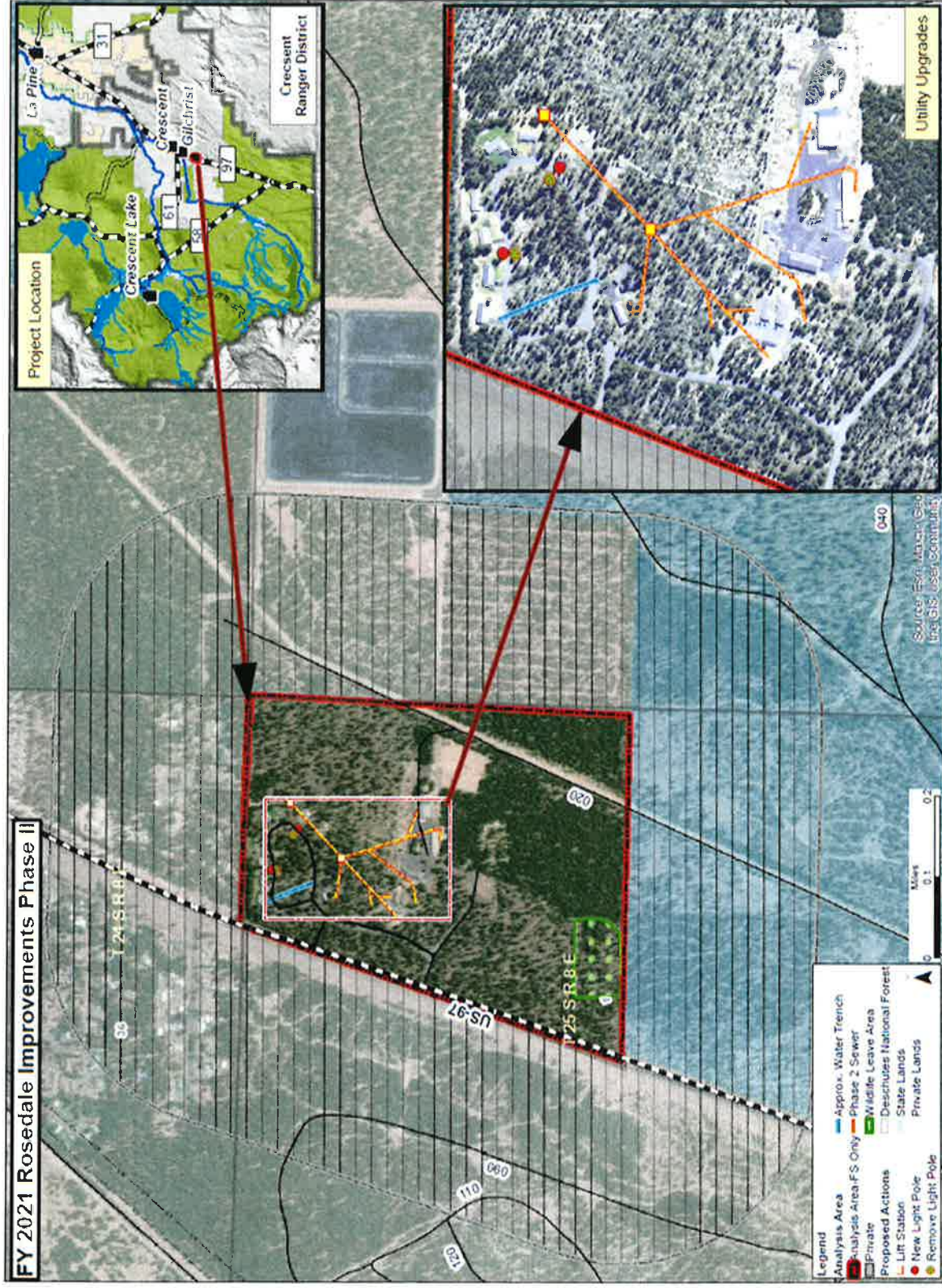


Figure 2. Rosedale Administrative Site and Wildlife Leave Area

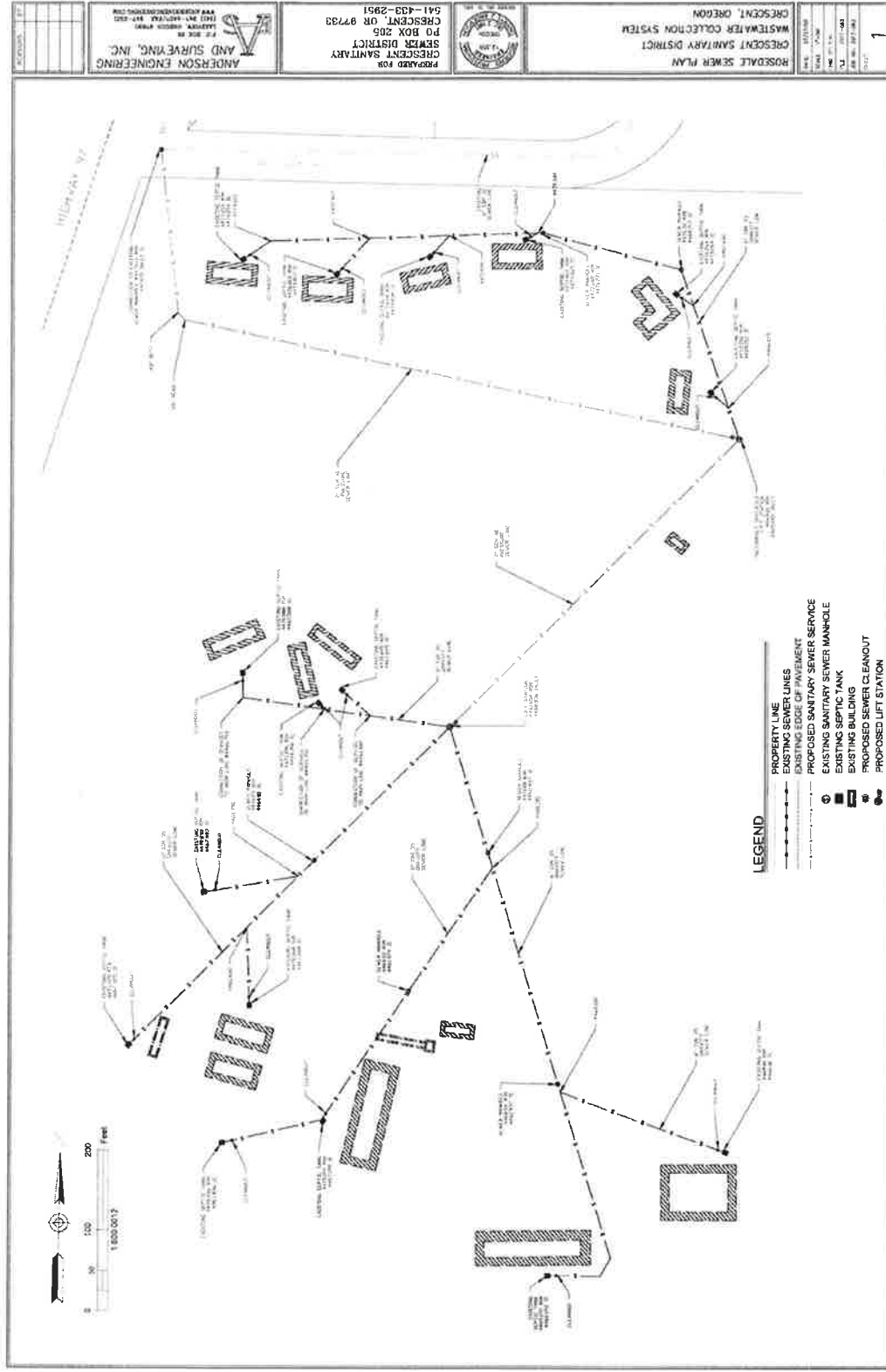


Figure 3. Engineered Drawing of Rosedale Administrative Site Septic Phase II